

CONJECTURE GAMES PRESENTS:

UNE

**the universal NPC emulator
revised**

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Vasey '07

“Nothing happens unless first we dream.” –Carl Sandberg

“One day one of my little nephews came up to me and asked me if the equator was a real line that went around the Earth, or just an imaginary one. I had to laugh. Laugh and laugh. Because I didn’t know, and I thought that maybe by laughing he would forget what he asked me.” –Jack Handey

**Dedicated to Claire.
I hope your imagination will be as wild and large as the sea.**

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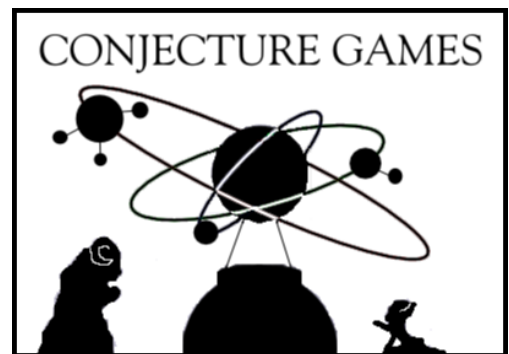


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What is UNE?

UNE is a supplement for any pen and paper roleplaying game to help facilitate the creation and playing of a non-player character (“NPC”) to something with the depth of a true character.

UNE is universal. It was designed to be run with every standing genre in tabletop roleplaying. Some terms must bend a little more depending on a genre. The terms are not definite answers that restrict possibilities; they are ideas to get the creative juices flowing.

UNE is focused on the NPC aspect of a game. With UNE, a simple NPC can become a true character in the story with just a few die rolls, and UNE can give that NPC direction of purpose for itself, towards characters, and even for the story as a whole.

UNE is an emulator. It can be used without a GM, and some of the best results may occur when a whole group of players uses it.

When to use UNE

The supplement should be used when the game is stuck on “who?”

This typically arises is when a player wishes to have her player character (“PC”) interact with an NPC that was created as a prop.

A neighbor steps outside as a PC is about to break into a home to reflect an increased difficulty to the breaking and entering action. As a prop the neighbor

serves merely to deter the PC or increase the challenge difficulty. What happens when the PC engages with the neighbor with guile instead of stealth. Is the neighbor brash? Will he run inside if threatened? Is he friendly enough to share a smoke with a stranger? What if the PC escalates the situation?

Other examples: a merchant of whom a PC requests an abnormal favor, a waitress used as an information delivery prop with whom a PC starts to flirt, or an enemy that is interrogated with unforeseen questions.

Undeveloped NPC’s can also occur when a player wishes his PC to seek out a general NPC he just “created.” A player decides his PC knows somebody, or at least knows they exist, and seeks them out. The problem occurs when the PC starts interacting (usually requesting something) with the NPC. A well-rounded NPC contact can add more depth to the interaction than a mechanical die roll.

Many skilled GM’s develop NPC depth and information on the fly. However, even the best GM’s can get stuck in an adversarial or cliché rut. An adversarial creation makes the NPC as antagonistic as possible to create a *challenge* or force direction. A clichéd NPC will be born from the first idea that pops into mind, and it often will stem from archetypes of recent media.

UNE will give any shallow NPC a whole new meaning and depth. UNE can also be used as an overlay when the NPC concept is pretty much solidified, and some extra ideas will create a more fully-fleshed out character.



Developer Notes on UNE

Know Your Puppet

An NPC is a puppet of either the GM, the solo player, or a collaborative table. The better known the puppet is the better the puppetmaster(s) can control it. The more depth the NPC has the more it feels like an actual actor in the game. A deep NPC feels like it can walk on its own, without strings.

In roleplaying, either as a player or GM, the question is what would the character do. What would the barkeep do if offered a bribe? What would the prince do if his historic rise to power is mentioned? What would a handler do if asked to do something off the books?

In a game where the GM has a clear sense of direction the NPC can be used as a prop in the sense that it doesn't matter what was written down about the NPC in the GM notes. What matters is how to get the story going where the GM intends it to go.

In a GM-less game or one where the GM is freeforming, the use of an NPC as a prop has less story merit. The use of an NPC as an actual character, on the other hand, will produce greater scenes.

Context, Context, Context!

UNE is nothing without context. The more context available to use when determining UNE's outcomes the better the final NPC. How does this relate to the game and setting? How does this relate to the current circumstances? How does this relate to the other UNE results? Those three questions should be asked if a term doesn't feel right.

Always fall back to interpreting the words heavily in context of the game. In *Vampire: the Requiem* a serf might be a blood doll and a thug might be a ghoul. In *Godlike* a crone could be a Polish yenta and a bum could be a prisoner of war. A sorcerer in *Stars Without Number* might be a theoretical astrophysicist who makes gadgets out of those theories. Use the gravity of the game!

The Rule of Negative Inference

Some terms will have to be thrown out. The conflict between the preconceptions or other rolled terms will be too great to utilize them in such a way that the fun of the game continues.

It is always better to keep moving forward than to spend a gross amount of time trying to reconcile some terms. However, it is beneficial to ask when paring down terms "why does this term not work?" This will not only strengthen your NPC concept, but it may also provide more depth to the preconceptions and terms that are left on the table.

UNE was designed to have most characteristics be as complementary as possible. Coming upon a hermit that has lived in the swamp for thirty years, and then rolling "drifter" may cause a few problems. The idea is to use the rolled terms as a broadly interpreted overlay to color the pre-conceived NPC. The "drifter" swamp hermit could be one who lives in a houseboat floating around the swamp. If "drifter" just doesn't feel right then reinforce the fact that the hermit is a permanent denizen of the swamp, and move along.

Story Creation

One of the easiest ways to create an adventure is to create numerous NPC's and then make a tangled web between them all. Have the players sort out who is right, who wins, etc. UNE works well for this GM exercise because it eliminates much of the time consuming applications of character creation. The results (and gameplay) may work out surprisingly well, even when little time can be given to adventure/story creation. Check out conjecturegames.com for tutorials on using UNE to create adventure.

NPC Creator

The NPC Creator is used to create or refine existing NPCs. One of the strongest core concepts to a person is “what do you do?” The NPC Modifier and NPC Noun combine to name the NPC.

The second half of the NPC Creator is to form motivations for the NPC. It exists to further push the boundaries of the NPC. For example, a “fair judge” is a fairly vanilla NPC, but when it gets the motivation to “persecute old religions” that judge starts getting some nice, rough edges.

0. Determine any pre-conceived facts. If there are any concrete ideas about the NPC that must remain, now is the time to jot them down.

1. Determine what the NPC is. Roll a d100 (or 2 d10’s with one d10 being the 10’s) to obtain an NPC Modifier from Table 1. Roll a d100 to obtain an NPC Noun from Table 2. Combine the two as if forming a simple sentence to describe the NPC. For example if a 21 is rolled followed by a 45, the combination would read “Inept Actor.” If some facts about the NPC are previously known, merely use what works and discard what does not.

Table 1: NPC Modifier

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------------|----|-------------|----|---------------|----|---------------|-----|-------------|
| 1 | superfluous | 21 | inept | 41 | pleasant | 61 | lethargic | 81 | jovial |
| 2 | addicted | 22 | banal | 42 | insensitive | 62 | defiant | 82 | shrewd |
| 3 | conformist | 23 | logical | 43 | titled | 63 | obnoxious | 83 | liberal |
| 4 | nefarious | 24 | subtle | 44 | inexperienced | 64 | insightful | 84 | compliant |
| 5 | sensible | 25 | reputable | 45 | prying | 65 | tactless | 85 | destitute |
| 6 | untrained | 26 | wicked | 46 | oblivious | 66 | fanatic | 86 | conniving |
| 7 | romantic | 27 | lazy | 47 | refined | 67 | plebeian | 87 | careful |
| 8 | unreasonable | 28 | pessimistic | 48 | indispensable | 68 | childish | 88 | alluring |
| 9 | skilled | 29 | solemn | 49 | scholarly | 69 | pious | 89 | defective |
| 10 | neglectful | 30 | habitual | 50 | conservative | 70 | uneducated | 90 | optimistic |
| 11 | lively | 31 | meek | 51 | uncouth | 71 | inconsiderate | 91 | affluent |
| 12 | forthright | 32 | helpful | 52 | willful | 72 | cultured | 92 | despondent |
| 13 | idealistic | 33 | unconcerned | 53 | indifferent | 73 | revolting | 93 | mindless |
| 14 | unsupportive | 34 | generous | 54 | fickle | 74 | curious | 94 | passionate |
| 15 | rational | 35 | docile | 55 | elderly | 75 | touchy | 95 | devoted |
| 16 | coarse | 36 | cheery | 56 | sinful | 76 | needy | 96 | established |
| 17 | foolish | 37 | pragmatic | 57 | naive | 77 | dignified | 97 | unseemly |
| 18 | cunning | 38 | serene | 58 | privileged | 78 | pushy | 98 | dependable |
| 19 | delightful | 39 | thoughtful | 59 | glum | 79 | kind | 99 | righteous |
| 20 | miserly | 40 | hopeless | 60 | likable | 80 | corrupt | 100 | confident |



Table 2: NPC Noun

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------|----|------------|----|----------------|----|-------------|-----|--------------|
| 1 | gypsy | 21 | missionary | 41 | villager | 61 | mediator | 81 | performer |
| 2 | witch | 22 | outcast | 42 | magus | 62 | crook | 82 | magister |
| 3 | merchant | 23 | mercenary | 43 | conscript | 63 | civilian | 83 | serf |
| 4 | expert | 24 | caretaker | 44 | worker | 64 | activist | 84 | brute |
| 5 | commoner | 25 | hermit | 45 | actor | 65 | hero | 85 | inquisitor |
| 6 | judge | 26 | orator | 46 | herald | 66 | champion | 86 | lord |
| 7 | ranger | 27 | chieftain | 47 | highwayman | 67 | cleric | 87 | villain |
| 8 | occultist | 28 | pioneer | 48 | fortune-hunter | 68 | slave | 88 | professor |
| 9 | reverend | 29 | burglar | 49 | governor | 69 | gunman | 89 | servant |
| 10 | thug | 30 | vicar | 50 | scrapper | 70 | clairvoyant | 90 | charmer |
| 11 | drifter | 31 | officer | 51 | monk | 71 | patriarch | 91 | globetrotter |
| 12 | journeyman | 32 | explorer | 52 | homemaker | 72 | shopkeeper | 92 | sniper |
| 13 | statesman | 33 | warden | 53 | recluse | 73 | crone | 93 | courtier |
| 14 | astrologer | 34 | outlaw | 54 | steward | 74 | adventurer | 94 | priest |
| 15 | duelist | 35 | adept | 55 | polymath | 75 | soldier | 95 | tradesman |
| 16 | jack-of-all-trades | 36 | bum | 56 | magician | 76 | entertainer | 96 | hitman |
| 17 | aristocrat | 37 | sorcerer | 57 | traveler | 77 | craftsman | 97 | wizard |
| 18 | preacher | 38 | laborer | 58 | vagrant | 78 | scientist | 98 | beggar |
| 19 | artisan | 39 | master | 59 | apprentice | 79 | ascetic | 99 | tradesman |
| 20 | rogue | 40 | ascendant | 60 | politician | 80 | superior | 100 | warrior |

2. **(Optional) Find the NPC Power Level.** Determine the randomness level (“R-level”) of the scene by assigning a numeric value ranging from orderly to chaotic. The R-level can also represent a difficulty level where the higher the R-level the harder the challenges. Roll a d100 to determine the NPC’s power level relative to that of the PC’s using Table 3. For example if the R-level is Disarray and a 76 is rolled, the NPC will be Slightly Stronger than the PC’s.

(Optional) Table 3: NPC Power Level

| R-level | Much Weaker | Slightly Weaker | Comparable | Slightly Stronger | Much Stronger |
|--------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Order (1) | 1-2 | 3-10 | 11-90 | 91-98 | 99-100 |
| Calm (2) | 1-4 | 5-15 | 16-85 | 86-96 | 97-100 |
| Standard (3) | 1-5 | 6-20 | 21-80 | 81-95 | 96-100 |
| Disarray (4) | 1-8 | 9-25 | 26-75 | 76-92 | 93-100 |
| Chaos (5) | 1-12 | 13-30 | 31-70 | 71-88 | 89-100 |

3. **Determine the NPC’s Motivations.** Roll a d100 for an NPC Motivation Verb in Table 4, and roll a d100 for an NPC Motivation Noun from Table 5. Combine the two as if to form a simple sentence. Repeat this two more times. If the second or third rolled NPC Motivation Noun is in the same column as a previously rolled Motivation noun, discard the roll and re-roll.

For example, the first roll is a 24 followed by a 94, giving “Chronicle Animals.” The second roll is a 60 followed by a 7, giving “Account Opulence.” The final roll is a 21 followed by an 89. However 89 is in the same column as the previously rolled 94. Therefore that NPC Motivation Noun must be re-rolled. NPC Motivation Verb rolls never have to be re-rolled based on column.

Table 4: NPC Motivation Verb

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------|----|------------|----|-------------|----|-------------|-----|------------|
| 1 | advise | 21 | shepherd | 41 | take | 61 | work | 81 | manage |
| 2 | obtain | 22 | abuse | 42 | discover | 62 | accompany | 82 | suppress |
| 3 | attempt | 23 | indulge | 43 | deter | 63 | offend | 83 | proclaim |
| 4 | spoil | 24 | chronicle | 44 | acquire | 64 | guide | 84 | operate |
| 5 | oppress | 25 | fulfill | 45 | damage | 65 | learn | 85 | access |
| 6 | interact | 26 | drive | 46 | publicize | 66 | persecute | 86 | refine |
| 7 | create | 27 | review | 47 | burden | 67 | communicate | 87 | compose |
| 8 | abduct | 28 | aid | 48 | advocate | 68 | process | 88 | undermine |
| 9 | promote | 29 | follow | 49 | implement | 69 | report | 89 | explain |
| 10 | conceive | 30 | advance | 50 | understand | 70 | develop | 90 | discourage |
| 11 | blight | 31 | guard | 51 | collaborate | 71 | steal | 91 | attend |
| 12 | progress | 32 | conquer | 52 | strive | 72 | suggest | 92 | detect |
| 13 | distress | 33 | hinder | 53 | complete | 73 | weaken | 93 | execute |
| 14 | possess | 34 | plunder | 54 | compel | 74 | achieve | 94 | maintain |
| 15 | record | 35 | construct | 55 | join | 75 | secure | 95 | realize |
| 16 | embrace | 36 | encourage | 56 | assist | 76 | inform | 96 | convey |
| 17 | contact | 37 | agonize | 57 | defile | 77 | patronize | 97 | rob |
| 18 | pursue | 38 | comprehend | 58 | produce | 78 | depress | 98 | establish |
| 19 | associate | 39 | administer | 59 | institute | 79 | determine | 99 | overthrow |
| 20 | prepare | 40 | relate | 60 | account | 80 | seek | 100 | support |

Table 5: NPC Motivation Noun

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------------|----|------------------|----|----------------|----|------------|-----|----------------|
| 1 | wealth | 21 | the wealthy | 41 | dreams | 61 | gluttony | 81 | advice |
| 2 | hardship | 22 | the populous | 42 | discretion | 62 | lust | 82 | propaganda |
| 3 | affluence | 23 | enemies | 43 | love | 63 | envy | 83 | science |
| 4 | resources | 24 | the public | 44 | freedom | 64 | greed | 84 | knowledge |
| 5 | prosperity | 25 | religion | 45 | pain | 65 | laziness | 85 | communications |
| 6 | poverty | 26 | the poor | 46 | faith | 66 | wrath | 86 | lies |
| 7 | opulence | 27 | family | 47 | slavery | 67 | pride | 87 | myths |
| 8 | deprivation | 28 | the elite | 48 | enlightenment | 68 | purity | 88 | riddles |
| 9 | success | 29 | academia | 49 | racism | 69 | moderation | 89 | stories |
| 10 | distress | 30 | the forsaken | 50 | sensuality | 70 | vigilance | 90 | legends |
| 11 | contraband | 31 | the law | 51 | dissonance | 71 | zeal | 91 | industry |
| 12 | music | 32 | the government | 52 | peace | 72 | composure | 92 | new religions |
| 13 | literature | 33 | the oppressed | 53 | discrimination | 73 | charity | 93 | progress |
| 14 | technology | 34 | friends | 54 | disbelief | 74 | modesty | 94 | animals |
| 15 | alcohol | 35 | criminals | 55 | pleasure | 75 | atrocities | 95 | ghosts |
| 16 | medicines | 36 | allies | 56 | hate | 76 | cowardice | 96 | magic |
| 17 | beauty | 37 | secret societies | 57 | happiness | 77 | narcissism | 97 | nature |
| 18 | strength | 38 | the world | 58 | servitude | 78 | compassion | 98 | old religions |
| 19 | intelligence | 39 | military | 59 | harmony | 79 | valor | 99 | expertise |
| 20 | force | 40 | the church | 60 | justice | 80 | patience | 100 | spirits |

4. Combine all the terms to create an NPC. The creator should now have a rough sentence describing the qualities of the NPC. For example: *A corrupt recluse, slightly stronger than the party, guards moderation, abuses pleasure, and communicates prosperity.* The next step is to decide the why or how for each term. The examples that follow will expand on this process. Having context is the best way to determine how the created sentence will generate an NPC. Try to link the terms not only to the overall game or setting, but also to the story, campaign, chronicle, or adventure itself.

Completely Random NPC Creator Examples:

The Neighboring King

The setting is in a generic fantasy RPG. Allusions have been made about a neighboring kingdom, and I want to roll up the ruler of that realm. The kingdom will then mirror the ruler.

Step 0: The only fact I know is that the NPC is a king of a nearby kingdom.

Step 1: *Rolled 4 on the NPC Modifier table to get “nefarious”, and rolled 87 on the NPC Noun table to get “officer”.*

In contemporary times this could easily be a general who rose to power with a military coup. While not as standard in a generic fantasy game with birthrights, noble houses, etc., it would make for an interesting neighboring kingdom. This king is well known for his atrocities in his rise to power through the kingdom’s military.

Step 2: *As we know the king is powerful, this step will be skipped.*

Step 3a: *The first motivation is rolled for (3) “attempt” and (9) “success” from Tables 4 and 5.*

Words can make the difference. As the king, this man has achieved the success of rising to power through the military, staging a coup, and becoming king. This might be enough to fill the role of the first motivation. I decide to go beyond so that the king is still motivated to “attempt success”. The king is still figuring out how to rule a kingdom, which would make the king’s rise to power a more recent event.

Step 3b: *The second motivation is rolled for (70) “develop” and a 10 is rolled for the motivation noun, but because the step 3a motivation noun roll of 9 and the newly-rolled 10 are in the same column, the latter is re-rolled to (44) “freedom”. The second motivation is “develop freedom”.*

We have a “nefarious king”, but that doesn’t mean we need to make a completely evil character. Perhaps the reason for all the atrocities is that the “nefarious king” is actually a lesser evil to the previous ruler. This is where context of the game world would come in handy to point to that greater evil, but for now I will add that the king’s rise to power was paved with good intentions.

Step 3c: *The third motivation is rolled for (13) “distress” and (95) “ghosts”. Note that the first and third NPC Motivation Verbs came from the same column. This does not require a re-roll, as a re-roll is required only if successive NPC Motivation Nouns are from the same column.*

“Distress ghosts” can go two ways, and my gut reaction is I want the king to have an Achilles’ heel. The first interpretation is that the king is making a ghostly being pretty unhappy. I could easily think that the king is dancing on some graves. It is more interesting, to me, if the king is in distress over the ghosts of his past rise to power. Perhaps in the fantasy game they are *real* ghosts, but it could be just as likely that they are his personal or mental ghosts.

The Handler

In many detective or spy games there will be a point-of-contact for the players. This person is usually the key to initiating adventures and acts as a go-between from the players to whatever agency or powerful entity has the players acting. I've gone the "man in black" handler far too often, and I want to see if UNE can break my stereotypical go-to.

Step 0: This character is a handler for the characters. She works directly for the FBI.

Step 1: *The dice are rolled and the NPC modifier is (64) "insightful" and the NPC noun is (44) "worker".*

This isn't that stereotype breaking, but it does start to get the juices flowing. "Worker" further amplifies her role as a handler. She does her job. Perhaps "insightful" tweaks it a little bit by making her see the PC's side of things as well as the agency's.

Step 2: *At an R-level of Standard (3), she is (18) slightly weaker than the party.*

Step 3a: *The first motivation is rolled to be (93) execute (4) resources.*

Step 3b: *The second motivation is rolled to be is (60) account (21) the wealthy.*

Step 3c: *The third motivation is rolled to be (1) advise (64) greed.*

Instead of fleshing out the NPC step-by-step as in The Neighboring King example, in this example I will roll and interpret all the motivations at once.

The motivation to "execute resources" could mean the PC's as assets or it could mean the agency's resources. Either way this might edge her to in an accountant-type direction. This can kind of tie in to "account the wealthy". She keeps tabs on money. With "advise greed" I kind of have an idea where this is going. I'll smash three stereotypes together to see if she can't become a bit more interesting. She is going to be a well-informed handler with a bookish nature that came from a close, wealthy family.

This won't change her role as "quest giver" for the characters, but now I can drop in things that gave her more dimensions. She is very strict with any resource requests, including post-adventure resources ("where is the ordinance?"), she can explain things on the agency's behalf without such a stonewall, and she might be distracted at times dealing with her rich family, who might also need handling.

For more UNE Examples check out conjecturegames.com!

NPC Interaction Emulator

NPC Mood

The NPC Mood module is used to determine the NPC's mood in the scene. It can be used to add some twists to the game. If a friendly NPC turns up very guarded to the PC's all of the sudden there is likely something going on.

The most important thing to ask when given a surprising roll is "why?" A spy handler that is "forthcoming" one day and only "sociable" could be explained with personal life, situation of the mission, etc., but when the spy handler becomes "cautious" around the PC's, something must be up.

The NPC Mood module also puts immediate spin on any blander neutral character. A neutral barkeep being neutral can be rather boring. A barkeep being overly friendly or overly cautious to the PC's can flavor the world a bit better. Perhaps there is nothing to it but the PC's reputation having already reached the barkeep. Perhaps it's just the barkeep's prejudices. Either way the game gets a tad more colorful.

- Determine the NPC Relationship to the speaking character.** This is the long term variable between the PC and the NPC. It should rarely change from use to use unless major in-game effects occur between the NPC and the PC. That is not to say an NPC cannot go from neutral to hostile in the course of the scene; only that this change should be strongly justified in game.
- Determine the NPC Conversation Mood to the speaking character.** Roll a d100 to determine the NPC's current conversation mood.

| NPC Relationship | loved | 1 | 2-6 | 7-16 | 17-31 | 32-70 | 71-85 | 86-100 |
|------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|--------|
| | friendly | 1-2 | 3-8 | 9-20 | 21-40 | 41-76 | 77-89 | 90-100 |
| peaceful | 1-3 | 4-11 | 12-25 | 26-55 | 56-82 | 83-93 | 94-100 | |
| neutral | 1-5 | 6-15 | 16-30 | 31-60 | 71-85 | 86-95 | 96-100 | |
| distrustful | 1-7 | 8-18 | 19-46 | 47-76 | 77-90 | 91-97 | 98-100 | |
| hostile | 1-11 | 12-24 | 25-61 | 62-81 | 82-93 | 94-98 | 99-100 | |
| hated | 1-15 | 16-30 | 31-69 | 70-84 | 85-94 | 95-99 | 100 | |
| | withdrawn | guarded | cautious | neutral | sociable | helpful | forthcoming | |
| | NPC Conversation Mood | | | | | | | |

NPC Importance

This emulator should be used when you have no idea what the NPC will want to talk about. It gives the NPC's *raison d'être*, the actor's reason for being in the story. This emulator can be used to help figure out why the NPC appeared, or what purpose that NPC will bring. Instead of dealing with binary responses using the NPC Response module, you can use the NPC Discussion module to quickly focus the conversational aspect of the NPC.

- Determine the NPC Bearing.** The NPC Bearing is how the NPC regards the focus of the discussion. If there are enough facts to do so, choose the demeanor of the NPC from the top of Table 7. Otherwise roll a d100 or d8 to determine the demeanor. After a demeanor has been determined, roll a d10 or d100 to find the NPC Bearing using Table 7.

| Table 7: NPC Bearing | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | scheming | insane | friendly | hostile |
| | 1-12 (1) | 13-24 (2) | 25-36 (3) | 37-49 (4) |
| 1-10 (1) | intent | madness | alliance | death |
| 11-20 (2) | bargain | fear | comfort | capture |
| 21-30 (3) | means | accident | gratitude | judgment |
| 31-40 (4) | proposition | chaos | shelter | combat |
| 41-50 (5) | plan | idiocy | happiness | surrender |
| 51-60 (6) | compromise | illusion | support | rage |
| 61-70 (7) | agenda | turmoil | promise | resentment |
| 71-80 (8) | arrangement | confusion | delight | submission |
| 81-90 (9) | negotiation | façade | aid | injury |
| 91-100 (10) | plot | bewilderment | celebration | destruction |
| | inquisitive | knowing | mysterious | prejudiced |
| | 50-62 (5) | 63-75 (6) | 76-88 (7) | 89-100 (8) |
| 1-10 (1) | questions | report | rumor | reputation |
| 11-20 (2) | investigation | effects | uncertainty | doubt |
| 21-30 (3) | interest | examination | secrets | bias |
| 31-40 (4) | demand | records | misdirection | dislike |
| 41-50 (5) | suspicion | account | whispers | partiality |
| 51-60 (6) | request | news | lies | belief |
| 61-70 (7) | curiosity | history | shadows | view |
| 71-80 (8) | skepticism | telling | enigma | discrimination |
| 81-90 (9) | command | discourse | obscurity | assessment |
| 91-100 (10) | petition | speech | conundrum | difference |

2. Determine the NPC Focus. Roll d100 to find the NPC focus of the conversation using Table 8. If possible the NPC Focus should be regarded as pertaining to the PC of the player rolling, the PC that will be speaking, or the party members in general. It may be helpful to put the word “PC’s” or “your” in front of the NPC Focus if there is a question. It is also helpful to narrow the NPC Focus. If “last story” was rolled figure out what the last story was. What happened during the last story that made this NPC want to discuss it?

| Table 8: NPC Focus | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------|----------------|--------|---------------|
| 1-3 | current scene | 4-6 | last story | 7-9 | equipment |
| 10-12 | parents | 13-15 | history | 16-18 | retainers |
| 19-21 | wealth | 22-24 | relics | 25-27 | last action |
| 28-30 | skills | 31-33 | superiors | 34-36 | fame |
| 37-39 | campaign | 40-42 | future action | 43-45 | friends |
| 46-48 | allies | 49-51 | last scene | 52-54 | contacts |
| 55-57 | flaws | 58-60 | antagonist | 61-63 | rewards |
| 64-66 | experience | 67-69 | knowledge | 70-72 | recent scene |
| 73-75 | community | 76-78 | treasure | 79-81 | the character |
| 82-84 | current story | 85-87 | family | 88-90 | power |
| 91-93 | weapons | 94-96 | previous scene | 97-100 | enemy |

3. Combine the NPC Bearing and NPC Focus to determine the basis of the NPC Discussion. The words should be combined as in a simple sentence; for example, “the insane NPC speaks of madness regarding the PC’s allies.” That sentence will be the substance of what the NPC will want to discuss.

Completely Random NPC Importance module Story Hooks :

The Neighboring King

Using the example from above, if the party meets with the neighboring king, a nefarious kind of guy, encounters will likely be “distrustful” or worse on the NPC relationship scale. NPC conversation mood is much more dynamic.

Regale Me! [NPC Bearing (27/43) *happiness* (friendly); NPC focus (64) *experience*] – the king has heard of the party’s legend, and he wants to be entertained (and distracted) by some of the PC’s adventures. Change his mood if he hears of any oppression.

Steep Toll [NPC Bearing (52/35) *demand* (inquisitive); NPC focus (78) *treasure*] – the new kingdom’s government needs funds, and the party may have inadvertently “crossed” borders. This may provide a good encounter to introducing the neighboring kingdom. The king could also force the PC’s to find some lost treasure.

Ex-National Treasures [NPC Bearing (74/15) *effects* (knowing); NPC focus (22) *relics*] – a lot of the kingdom’s past has been dumped into the treasury (otherwise bare), which includes a MacGuffin the PC’s need. The king will gladly unload any of this “worthless” junk for a steep fee, but the PC’s might stir up some of the past in obtaining the relic they need.

The Handler

The other example involves the detective/superhero PC’s handler that was created above. The NPC Binary Response table will usually be on the good half since she is clearly an ally.

Family Issues [NPC Bearing (43/61) *resentment* (hostile); NPC focus (90) *power*] – the handler started working for the FBI to escape her planned, rich life. Her family wields a lot of power and is making her rise in the FBI troublesome.

Mishandled [NPC Bearing (43/61) *chaos* (insane); NPC focus (46) *allies*] – the handler just doesn’t handle the PC’s wackjob group; she also handles a few other groups of operatives. Usually all the assets are carefully allocated and managed, but somehow there has been a mixup. Either the PC’s lost some equipment or another team did.

Ceremonial [NPC Bearing (43/61) *promise* (friendly); NPC focus (75) *community*] - for a job well done, the PC’s have earned a medal of honor. Unfortunately, the FBI doesn’t want any more ties than it already has to the PC’s group. As a running joke, the handler might be bringing this up quite often.

For more UNE Examples check out conjecturegames.com!

Appendix I: Tables

Table 1: NPC Modifier

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------------|----|-------------|----|---------------|----|---------------|-----|-------------|
| 1 | superfluous | 21 | inept | 41 | pleasant | 61 | lethargic | 81 | joyful |
| 2 | addicted | 22 | banal | 42 | insensitive | 62 | defiant | 82 | shrewd |
| 3 | conformist | 23 | logical | 43 | titled | 63 | obnoxious | 83 | liberal |
| 4 | nefarious | 24 | subtle | 44 | inexperienced | 64 | insightful | 84 | compliant |
| 5 | sensible | 25 | reputable | 45 | prying | 65 | tactless | 85 | destitute |
| 6 | untrained | 26 | wicked | 46 | oblivious | 66 | fanatic | 86 | conniving |
| 7 | romantic | 27 | lazy | 47 | refined | 67 | plebeian | 87 | careful |
| 8 | unreasonable | 28 | pessimistic | 48 | indispensable | 68 | childish | 88 | alluring |
| 9 | skilled | 29 | solemn | 49 | scholarly | 69 | pious | 89 | defective |
| 10 | neglectful | 30 | habitual | 50 | conservative | 70 | uneducated | 90 | optimistic |
| 11 | lively | 31 | meek | 51 | uncouth | 71 | inconsiderate | 91 | affluent |
| 12 | forthright | 32 | helpful | 52 | willful | 72 | cultured | 92 | despondent |
| 13 | idealistic | 33 | unconcerned | 53 | indifferent | 73 | revolting | 93 | mindless |
| 14 | unsupportive | 34 | generous | 54 | fickle | 74 | curious | 94 | passionate |
| 15 | rational | 35 | docile | 55 | elderly | 75 | touchy | 95 | devoted |
| 16 | coarse | 36 | cheery | 56 | sinful | 76 | needy | 96 | established |
| 17 | foolish | 37 | pragmatic | 57 | naive | 77 | dignified | 97 | unseemly |
| 18 | cunning | 38 | serene | 58 | privileged | 78 | pushy | 98 | dependable |
| 19 | delightful | 39 | thoughtful | 59 | glum | 79 | kind | 99 | righteous |
| 20 | miserly | 40 | hopeless | 60 | likable | 80 | corrupt | 100 | confident |

Table 2: NPC Noun

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------|----|------------|----|----------------|----|-------------|-----|--------------|
| 1 | gypsy | 21 | missionary | 41 | villager | 61 | mediator | 81 | performer |
| 2 | witch | 22 | outcast | 42 | magus | 62 | crook | 82 | magister |
| 3 | merchant | 23 | mercenary | 43 | conscript | 63 | civilian | 83 | serf |
| 4 | expert | 24 | caretaker | 44 | worker | 64 | activist | 84 | brute |
| 5 | commoner | 25 | hermit | 45 | actor | 65 | hero | 85 | inquisitor |
| 6 | judge | 26 | orator | 46 | herald | 66 | champion | 86 | lord |
| 7 | ranger | 27 | chieftain | 47 | highwayman | 67 | cleric | 87 | villain |
| 8 | occultist | 28 | pioneer | 48 | fortune-hunter | 68 | slave | 88 | professor |
| 9 | reverend | 29 | burglar | 49 | governor | 69 | gunman | 89 | servant |
| 10 | thug | 30 | vicar | 50 | scrapper | 70 | clairvoyant | 90 | charmer |
| 11 | drifter | 31 | officer | 51 | monk | 71 | patriarch | 91 | globetrotter |
| 12 | journeyman | 32 | explorer | 52 | homemaker | 72 | shopkeeper | 92 | sniper |
| 13 | statesman | 33 | warden | 53 | recluse | 73 | crone | 93 | courtier |
| 14 | astrologer | 34 | outlaw | 54 | steward | 74 | adventurer | 94 | priest |
| 15 | duelist | 35 | adept | 55 | polymath | 75 | soldier | 95 | tradesman |
| 16 | jack-of-all-trades | 36 | bum | 56 | magician | 76 | entertainer | 96 | hitman |
| 17 | aristocrat | 37 | sorcerer | 57 | traveler | 77 | craftsman | 97 | wizard |
| 18 | preacher | 38 | laborer | 58 | vagrant | 78 | scientist | 98 | beggar |
| 19 | artisan | 39 | master | 59 | apprentice | 79 | ascetic | 99 | tradesman |
| 20 | rogue | 40 | ascendant | 60 | politician | 80 | superior | 100 | warrior |

(Optional) Table 3: NPC Power Level

| R-level | Much Weaker | Slightly Weaker | Comparable | Slightly Stronger | Much Stronger |
|---------|-------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1 | 1-2 | 3-10 | 11-90 | 91-98 | 99-100 |
| 2 | 1-4 | 5-15 | 16-85 | 86-96 | 97-100 |
| 3 | 1-5 | 6-20 | 21-80 | 81-95 | 96-100 |
| 4 | 1-8 | 9-25 | 26-75 | 76-92 | 93-100 |
| 5 | 1-12 | 13-30 | 31-70 | 71-88 | 89-100 |

Table 4: NPC Motivation Verb

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------|----|------------|----|-------------|----|-------------|-----|------------|
| 1 | advise | 21 | shepherd | 41 | take | 61 | work | 81 | manage |
| 2 | obtain | 22 | abuse | 42 | discover | 62 | accompany | 82 | suppress |
| 3 | attempt | 23 | indulge | 43 | deter | 63 | offend | 83 | proclaim |
| 4 | spoil | 24 | chronicle | 44 | acquire | 64 | guide | 84 | operate |
| 5 | oppress | 25 | fulfill | 45 | damage | 65 | learn | 85 | access |
| 6 | interact | 26 | drive | 46 | publicize | 66 | persecute | 86 | refine |
| 7 | create | 27 | review | 47 | burden | 67 | communicate | 87 | compose |
| 8 | abduct | 28 | aid | 48 | advocate | 68 | process | 88 | undermine |
| 9 | promote | 29 | follow | 49 | implement | 69 | report | 89 | explain |
| 10 | conceive | 30 | advance | 50 | understand | 70 | develop | 90 | discourage |
| 11 | blight | 31 | guard | 51 | collaborate | 71 | steal | 91 | attend |
| 12 | progress | 32 | conquer | 52 | strive | 72 | suggest | 92 | detect |
| 13 | distress | 33 | hinder | 53 | complete | 73 | weaken | 93 | execute |
| 14 | possess | 34 | plunder | 54 | compel | 74 | achieve | 94 | maintain |
| 15 | record | 35 | construct | 55 | join | 75 | secure | 95 | realize |
| 16 | embrace | 36 | encourage | 56 | assist | 76 | inform | 96 | convey |
| 17 | contact | 37 | agonize | 57 | defile | 77 | patronize | 97 | rob |
| 18 | pursue | 38 | comprehend | 58 | produce | 78 | depress | 98 | establish |
| 19 | associate | 39 | administer | 59 | institute | 79 | determine | 99 | overthrow |
| 20 | prepare | 40 | relate | 60 | account | 80 | seek | 100 | support |

Table 5: NPC Motivation Noun

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------------|----|------------------|----|----------------|----|------------|-----|----------------|
| 1 | wealth | 21 | the wealthy | 41 | dreams | 61 | gluttony | 81 | advice |
| 2 | hardship | 22 | the populous | 42 | discretion | 62 | lust | 82 | propaganda |
| 3 | affluence | 23 | enemies | 43 | love | 63 | envy | 83 | science |
| 4 | resources | 24 | the public | 44 | freedom | 64 | greed | 84 | knowledge |
| 5 | prosperity | 25 | religion | 45 | pain | 65 | laziness | 85 | communications |
| 6 | poverty | 26 | the poor | 46 | faith | 66 | wrath | 86 | lies |
| 7 | opulence | 27 | family | 47 | slavery | 67 | pride | 87 | myths |
| 8 | deprivation | 28 | the elite | 48 | enlightenment | 68 | purity | 88 | riddles |
| 9 | success | 29 | academia | 49 | racism | 69 | moderation | 89 | stories |
| 10 | distress | 30 | the forsaken | 50 | sensuality | 70 | vigilance | 90 | legends |
| 11 | contraband | 31 | the law | 51 | dissonance | 71 | zeal | 91 | industry |
| 12 | music | 32 | the government | 52 | peace | 72 | composure | 92 | new religions |
| 13 | literature | 33 | the oppressed | 53 | discrimination | 73 | charity | 93 | progress |
| 14 | technology | 34 | friends | 54 | disbelief | 74 | modesty | 94 | animals |
| 15 | alcohol | 35 | criminals | 55 | pleasure | 75 | atrocities | 95 | ghosts |
| 16 | medicines | 36 | allies | 56 | hate | 76 | cowardice | 96 | magic |
| 17 | beauty | 37 | secret societies | 57 | happiness | 77 | narcissism | 97 | nature |
| 18 | strength | 38 | the world | 58 | servitude | 78 | compassion | 98 | old religions |
| 19 | intelligence | 39 | military | 59 | harmony | 79 | valor | 99 | expertise |
| 20 | force | 40 | the church | 60 | justice | 80 | patience | 100 | spirits |

| NPC Relationship | loved | 1 | 2-6 | 7-16 | 17-31 | 32-70 | 71-85 | 86-100 |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------|-----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|
| | friendly | 1-2 | 3-8 | 9-20 | 21-40 | 41-76 | 77-89 | 90-100 |
| | peaceful | 1-3 | 4-11 | 12-25 | 26-55 | 56-82 | 83-93 | 94-100 |
| | neutral | 1-5 | 6-15 | 16-30 | 31-60 | 71-85 | 86-95 | 96-100 |
| | distrustful | 1-7 | 8-18 | 19-46 | 47-76 | 77-90 | 91-97 | 98-100 |
| | hostile | 1-11 | 12-24 | 25-61 | 62-81 | 82-93 | 94-98 | 99-100 |
| | hated | 1-15 | 16-30 | 31-69 | 70-84 | 85-94 | 95-99 | 100 |
| | NPC Conversation Mood | | withdrawn | guarded | cautious | neutral | sociable | helpful |

| | scheming | insane | friendly | hostile |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| | 1-12 (1) | 13-24 (2) | 25-36 (3) | 37-49 (4) |
| 1-10 (1) | intent | madness | alliance | death |
| 11-20 (2) | bargain | fear | comfort | capture |
| 21-30 (3) | means | accident | gratitude | judgment |
| 31-40 (4) | proposition | chaos | shelter | combat |
| 41-50 (5) | plan | idiocy | happiness | surrender |
| 51-60 (6) | compromise | illusion | support | rage |
| 61-70 (7) | agenda | turmoil | promise | resentment |
| 71-80 (8) | arrangement | confusion | delight | submission |
| 81-90 (9) | negotiation | façade | aid | injury |
| 91-100 (10) | plot | bewilderment | celebration | destruction |
| | inquisitive | knowing | mysterious | prejudiced |
| | 50-62 (5) | 63-75 (6) | 76-88 (7) | 89-100 (8) |
| 1-10 (1) | questions | report | rumor | reputation |
| 11-20 (2) | investigation | effects | uncertainty | doubt |
| 21-30 (3) | interest | examination | secrets | bias |
| 31-40 (4) | demand | records | misdirection | dislike |
| 41-50 (5) | suspicion | account | whispers | partiality |
| 51-60 (6) | request | news | lies | belief |
| 61-70 (7) | curiosity | history | shadows | view |
| 71-80 (8) | skepticism | telling | enigma | discrimination |
| 81-90 (9) | command | discourse | obscurity | assessment |
| 91-100 (10) | petition | speech | conundrum | difference |

| | | | | | |
|-------|---------------|-------|----------------|--------|---------------|
| 1-3 | current scene | 4-6 | last story | 7-9 | equipment |
| 10-12 | parents | 13-15 | history | 16-18 | retainers |
| 19-21 | wealth | 22-24 | relics | 25-27 | last action |
| 28-30 | skills | 31-33 | superiors | 34-36 | fame |
| 37-39 | campaign | 40-42 | future action | 43-45 | friends |
| 46-48 | allies | 49-51 | last scene | 52-54 | contacts |
| 55-57 | flaws | 58-60 | antagonist | 61-63 | rewards |
| 64-66 | experience | 67-69 | knowledge | 70-72 | recent scene |
| 73-75 | community | 76-78 | treasure | 79-81 | the character |
| 82-84 | current story | 85-87 | family | 88-90 | power |
| 91-93 | weapons | 94-96 | previous scene | 97-100 | enemy |

Appendix II: Rivals (UNE Tutorial)

Every party should have rivals. Not enemies, that's a give in. No, give the PC group some good ol' fashioned competition. Make the *Knuckles* to your player's *Sonic*. The *Malfoy* to their *Potter*. The *Pepsi* to their *Coke*. Of course, the PC's are in a party so make a party of rivals!

Regardless of the size of your player's PC party, I would start the Rivals off with a party of three. You can always add more, but three should be enough to give them each a personality to drive the players up the wall.

Choose any context you want. If you are a GM then make some PC rivals for your RPG group. If you don't have any PC's in mind choose your favorite setting from any medium (comic book, movie, novel, etc.) and make off-screen rivals for your favorite characters.

Step 1: Grab three notecards or sheets of paper. On each notecard roll up an NPC with the NPC Creator module.

Step 2: Determine the leader, the second, and the lackey. The leader should be a bit more powerful than the average of your PC's. The second should be about the same as the PC's, and the lackey should be weaker.

Step 3: Determine their average disposition towards each other by noting the NPC Conversation Mood from Table 6. This determines *on average* how helpful they are to each other, or polite, or condescending, etc.

Step 4: Determine their usual bearing towards the party by rolling Table 7. Table 8 might help at this point, but a lot of Table 8 focuses on the current events surrounding the PC's.

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Rivals Random Example

The players have created a fairly simple fantasy party with some melee, some thievery, some wizardry, and some holiness. Here is a completely random rival party created per the instruction above.

Step 1:

- (1) A needy inquisitor who processes science, agonizes disbelief, and guides the populous.
- (2) A fickle mercenary who communicates servitude, guards wealth, and reports the oppressed.
- (3) A refined master who executes spirits, works gluttony, and determines deprivation.

The refined master reminds me of a gentlemen torturer. Say if Dracula came up from his basement of horrors, wiped his bloody hands clean, and then joined his guests for tea. "Executes spirits" gives him a slight magic bent so I would make him a witch, sorcerer, or necromancer. I would say he is in complete control of the rivals, and seems to have the uncanny ability to know what the party is always lacking ("wouldn't it be helpful if you had more rope"). His name is Stoker.

The fickle mercenary reminds me of Bronn from *The Song of Ice and Fire* novel series. He's always poking fun at his position of being in service to the refined master, but he does his job well. He also keeps tabs on the party ("the oppressed") or possibly the refined master's slaves or household. His name is Bronn because I like Bronn.

The needy inquisitor definitely has that Doofenshmirtz feel (*Phineas and Ferb*). With the motivations, I would modify inquisitor to some type of scientist instead of an actual NPC with the Inquisitor class. This NPC is the rivals' wild card. "Guides the populous" is the hardest motivation to place, but it is possible that some of his inventions are well known across the land (much to the PC's chagrin). His name is Mirz.

Step 2:

I lay out my notecards. They seem apparent in terms of rival party status. The refined master seems like the leader. The fickle mercenary seems like the second-in-command, and the needy inquisitor sounds like the lackey.

Step 3:

Stoker is **distrustful and cautious** around Bronn. He knows that the mercenary could go find a master with more coin at any time. Stoker is **peaceful and helpful** to Mirz since he has the needy scientist wrapped around his finger. Bronn is **hostile and cautious** towards Mirz since Mirz is too much of a wildcard for Bronn's replaceable position. I will stop there and just say each reciprocates in kind. To add another layer of complexity, Bronn's attitude towards Stoker, and so on, could be decided and rolled separately.

Step 4:

Stoker is usually telling (knowing) to the party. I would assume it is usually in a mocking manner.

Bronn is usually compromising (scheming) to the party. Perhaps he could be ready to switch allegiances, and is looking for an out. Perhaps he is trying to keep tabs on the PC's.

Mirz is usually chaotic (insane) to the party. I would say of the three he is the least aware that he is a rival to anybody.